

ON LOOKING-GLASSES.

It has often struck us as evincing a want of good taste in our cabinet-makers, and not less so in the commonalty and gentry themselves, that the backs of looking-glasses are not made a little more sightly in their appearance to the passer-by, for it will instantly occur to our readers that in town or country one of the first things presented to the view through the open windows of the ordinary bed-chamber is the back of the looking-glass—a coarse “red raddled” bit of deal-board, with the price of the glass, varying from 5s. 9d. to 15s. 9d., marked upon it.

Now, what an improvement it would be to have a ready means of inserting a picture of permanent or of passing interest, not for the inquisitive gaze of the passer-by; but as being more agreeable to look upon than what we have described; and to the inmates of the house much more so, as in the case of swing-glasses the picture side might be turned to the room, for contemplation during the time of the glass itself not being in requisition.

We shall not be told that the ladies court the sight of no picture only in the looking-glass frame; we are sure they have leisure and disposition to give their admiration to rival though inferior beauties. At any rate, the plan we suggest will save a picture-frame to many, and will suggest frequent grateful thoughts.

A propos of looking-glasses, there is a plan adopted in some instances which deserves to be more generally known. It is that of fixing a pane of silvered glass in one of the squares of the sash, and is found of great use in dressing-rooms, where it serves as a mirror for shaving, &c. Here there is none of the incumbrances of a moveable, the glass is out of the way, and yet most conveniently at a height suited for its use; behind it is the usual pane of glass (blackened) agreeing with those of the whole sash or window, so that the external appearance is of the usual character.

THE STAFFORDSHIRE FARMSTEAD PLAN.

We have a letter from the “Young Architect” who furnished us with the plan, to which exceptions were taken by our correspondent “H.” and “A Farmer;” and although we think his letter not strong without provocation, we are compelled to exercise our privilege in staying a contest of words. It is a pity that objections cannot be pointed out in a kindly spirit, and be kindly attended to. “A Young Architect,” states that the Farmstead Plan has been admired and admitted as good in practice, and that he had contributed it from sources of his own, and entirely without the knowledge of the Architect.

In answer to the objection of “A Farmer,” he says, that “No. 5 on the plan was intended more as a closet than a pantry, and has a deadened light under the stairs, in the small entrance-hall.”

The position of the dairy is not complained of by the tenants of the house, and is not used at the time when “steams and stews” are sloot in the back-kitchen. Moreover, there are several steps down into the dairy, so that the boiler, which is not placed against the dairy wall, as alleged by “A Farmer,” but against the outside gable, is also almost on a level with the eaves of the dairy, which has a lean-to roof.

The pantry, however, he admits to be an imperfection in the plan.

He will excuse us for the liberty we have taken in curtailing his communication, and giving the essential substance in our own words.

PROPOSED NEW DOCK, HULL.—Negotiations are at this time being actively carried on between the Dock Company and the Government respecting the appropriation of the citadel-ground for dock purposes, but it is feared that the large amount required by the Government will preclude the possibility of purchase, which is much to be regretted, and is certainly a bad example from such a quarter. There is other land to be had provided the conflicting claims and views of interested parties can be reconciled; and there is yet time for going before Parliament for the next session. We hear that 134,000*l.* is the price put by Government upon about 25 acres of land and 16 acres of foreshore!

THE CROSS.

(Continued from No. 20)

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Pursuing our divisions, in the third place, we come to Devotional. Although all crosses, whether Memorial or Distinctive, were erected with the ulterior object of leading to prayer and religious contemplation, and might thus be justly included in the term *Devotional*, yet in the present instance it may be allowable to apply it solely to those that were raised with no other ostensible purpose in view.

The single isolated crosses in churchyards, from their invariable proximity to the porch, or chancel-door, appear to have been placed there, that they who approached, beholding them, might prepare themselves by the recital of a pater noster or other short prayer previous to joining in more solemn acts of worship. It is amongst these that the most ancient crosses are encountered: our progenitors held them in such reverence, that they, acting in an opposite spirit to men of modern days, instead of removing them because old and worn, preserved them, for that very reason, with the greater care and attention. It is the same with regard to fonts: strange to say, there are comparatively more fonts of the Norman period than of late dates; in most cases they have survived the edifices in which they originally stood. The most perfect churchyard crosses existing are of Saxon workmanship. Here it would be well to notice the erroneous opinions that till lately gained ground, in consequence of their having been adopted by some of our first antiquaries.

Gough, Nicholson, Pennant, and others, maintained that these crosses were the work of pagan Danes, or ancient Britons, on account of the frequent recurrence of what they falsely termed “the Runic knot;” in spite of the fact that this ornament occurred on stones, which had at one time borne the shape of “the cross;” a sign at once foreign or hateful to all idolaters; and that on monuments of similar age and workmanship, a sculptured representation of the crucifixion may occasionally be found, as at St. Patrick’s, county Louth, and Llanherne, Cornwall. On one of this character in the market-place of Sandbach, Cheshire, we have distinctly observed it between, what seemed to us, the symbols of the Evangelists. In most country churchyards may be seen a block of stone raised on three steps, often converted into the pedestal of a sun-dial; this was the old churchyard cross that was decapitated at the Reformation, or during the Rebellion. There are some fine examples of this sort of cross in Derbyshire, particularly at Eyam and Bakewell. Opposite the porch of Masham church, Yorkshire, stands a circular stump, 3 or 4 feet high, ornamented with two rows of niches and rude figures; this is the base of a Saxon cross, the circular form is very uncommon.

It was at the foot of these crosses that the man, whose crimes had separated him from the communion of his church, prostrated himself with bared feet and streaming eyes, imploring pardon for his offences, and avowing his sincere repentance in the presence of assembled multitudes. At Ripley, York, is a rude base with inverted niches, in the side in which the penitents might kneel around; hence it goes by the name of the “*weeping cross*.” At Han lled, Glamorganshire, one is called *Achwevan*, or stone of lamentation: there was another of the kind near Stafford.

Prior to that era of destruction, the dominion of the Commonwealth, there existed in old St. Paul’s-yard, and at Spitalfields, two interesting structures, used both before and subsequent to the Reformation for preaching from, whence their name *Pulpit*, or *Preaching Crosses*; from these it was the custom for a learned divine to deliver sermons at Easter, in the presence of the Lord Mayor and other city dignitaries, attended by their ladies, for whose accommodation temporary awnings were fixed around. The Spitalfields’ discourses have been continued since the Restoration at some adjoining place of worship. The cross at St. Paul’s was rebuilt by Thomas Kempe, bishop of London, temp. Henry 6th and 7th; nor was it disregarded and suffered to fall into a ruinous state by the worthy citizens, even after the change of religion; for it appears from Stow, that in Queen Elizabeth’s time, “the pulpit cross in Pawle’s yard was new repayed, painted, and partly enclosed with a wall of brick.” Not long after a sermon was preached from it before James 1st, who came in great state from Whitehall, accompanied by his queen, Charles, Prince of Wales, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and his whole court; and still more recently, May 30, 1630, Charles 1st, after having attended divine service in the cathedral, “went into a room and heard the sermon at Paul’s cross.” This cross was demolished by an order from Parliament, 1643; that at Spital fell somewhere about the same time. There are the remains of an elegant pulpit cross at Hereford, built for the use of the mendicant friars; an order who, by their active exertions and austere habits, in some degree,

reformed the abuses and laxity of discipline that had broken into monastic institutions. This cross consisted of an hexagonal canopy, moulded on five or six steps; from the centre rose a pillar, diverging into ribs for the roof. Altogether, it is a strikingly picturesque object; this—one at Iron Acton, Gloucester, and another at Shrewsbury, are all that are left to us of a somewhat uncommon sort of cross.

Another description of cross, equally if not more rare than the preceding, will conclude our examples of such as are erected or fixed in the earth: of that which accompanied a well or spring of water, a single specimen exists at a village near Ludlow, Shropshire; it is low, plain, and square, adjoining a stone trough; on it was an inscription, of which the sacred monogram, I.H.S., is all that can be deciphered; the well was probably formed for the convenience of the traveller by the monks of a neighbouring convent now in ruins.

An extended view of the subject would embrace all roads, crucifixes, and ornamental crosses; but as these diverge too much from architectural limits, we shall be content to allude to the former only. “The rood, Mary and John” was an universal appendage to the parish church; it usually stood between the nave and chancel, as a rich screen or gallery—the roodloft; in small and early edifices sometimes on a single beam; along the gallery or beam were ranged candles to be lighted on feasts and holidays. In the accounts of St. Helen’s, Abingdon, is an item, “received for the roodlight at Christmas, 23*s.* 2*d.*” Besides the figures of the rood, there was often an image of the saint to whom the church was dedicated; in the document just mentioned, there was paid, “for peynting the rood, Mary and John, with the patron of the church, 18*s.*”

In the work by Aringhius, from which we borrowed our first vignette, we noticed what appeared to us the germ of the rood, copied from the sculptured side of a coffin discovered in the Catacombs of Rome. It is the representation of a cross without the figure, but surmounted by the emblem of our Saviour, the Greek Λ and Π , the first two letters of *Xristos*, this is encircled by a laurel wreath, and supported by two doves; on one side of the cross stands St. John, on the other kneels the mother of Christ, as if fainting, upheld by a female figure. The rood was frequently placed behind altars and shrines. In the abbey of Durham “the black rood of Scotland, with Mary and John made of silver, as it were smocked all over, was set up on the pillar next St. Cuthbert’s shrine, in the south alley.” These images were commanded to be taken down throughout England in 1548, 1st of Edward VI.; that of old St. Paul’s was the first that came down, and the example was speedily followed in the churches of the metropolis and throughout the country. There are a few examples of the rood carved on the exterior walls of churches, near the entrance; a crucifix is engraved in Carter’s “*Antient Sculpture*,” from Romsey church, Hants, its total height is about six feet; its date of the twelfth century; another with Mary and John, at Sherborne, Dorsetshire, is of smaller dimensions and neater workmanship. In most cases, it is to be remarked that the figure of our Saviour is of larger proportions than the other two.

Before concluding, it seems to us not obtrusive to offer a few remarks on the various applications to which the cross might be put in the present day. There are numberless authorities from the writings of the fathers, Chrysostom, Eusebius, and others, to prove that its employment was of the greatest antiquity. Nor is antiquity alone the strongest plea for its introduction; it was respected by the leucoclasts, of the eighth century, who preserved it from the destruction with which they visited all carved images. In later days, not even Luther himself disapproved of crosses, if we may state so from the circumstance that in his works, by Melancthon, a frontispiece represents him kneeling before a crucifix; and Queen Elizabeth, who did much to restrain the violent Puritans of her reign, persisted in retaining a crucifix in her private chapel, until, according to Heylly, the ultra reformers at court one day prevailed on Patch, the domestic fool, to break it, no wiser man daring to undertake such a service.

It is when carried to extremes that a practice becomes productive of evil results: that the use of crosses was at one period greatly perverted is undeniable, and for that reason the prudence of our reformers withheld them from the people; but we should bear in mind that they were then so interwoven with the Romish ceremonies, which the mass of the people had but just relinquished, that there was some danger of their producing a relapse. But now, since there has been such a change in religious sentiments, we think there would be little chance of even the least enlightened amongst us paying undue honour to the holy emblem, and therefore see no substantial objection to its re-assuming that important position which its sacred character formerly imparted to it. What more appropriate monument